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volume for 1846, Father Gaertner tells of his sea voyage from Havre to New York. The letter of January 12, 1848, is signed by both, Inama and Gaertner, and gives a full and detailed description of their missionary labors. It also tells of an unexpected visit from an Indian chief of the Winnebago tribe, who turned out to be a Frenchman born at Bordeaux. He came to Canada where he settled down. After the death of his wife he married a young Indian squaw and settled on the Barakoo (Baraboo?) River which empties into the Wisconsin River. Mention is also made of Bishop Henni's intended journey to Europe and of the erection of the new Cathedral at Milwaukee. In the next letter, dated Sac Prairie, April 21, 1848, Father Gaertner refers to Henni's departure from New York, February 23, on the steamer *Washington*, and tells of the fear entertained for his safety in Europe on account of the revolution. However, a note of the editor (p. 680) states that Bishop Henni arrived from Italy in St. Gall on June 14, where he was expected to hold the Corpus Christi procession.³

Whether the volumes of the *Katholische Blaetter aus Tirol* after 1848 contain any more letters of Father Inama and Gaertner, I do not know. In all probability they do, and it would be worth while to look them up. In the volumes here there are quite a number of other interesting items of Catholic American history. I mention in particular a letter of Rev. Francis Pierz, a companion of Bishop Baraga, dated Arbre Croche, Michigan, March 2, 1843. There are other letters by Father Unterthiner, O.S.F., dated Cincinnati, May 9 and October 29, 1845; by Rev. Caspar Rehrl, pioneer missionary of Wisconsin, dated Calumet Village, Wis., November 5, 1845; by the Rev. Dr. Salzmann, dated Milwaukee, October 9, 1847, telling of his arrival in Baltimore and Milwaukee.

The foregoing pages may serve as a sample of the rich and interesting material bearing on our Catholic American history, which can be gathered from the volumes of Catholic periodicals published in Germany and Austria, at a time when Catholics began to emigrate to the United States, and when German missionaries here were obliged to appeal for help and assistance from the Catholics of the Fatherland.

Milwaukee, April, 1916.

✱ S. G. MESSMER.

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FATHER NASH, S.J., ARMY CHAPLAIN (1825-1895).

*"Nash, Michael, age 33 years, enrolled in New York City to serve two years, and mustered in as chaplain (6th N. Y. Vol. Inf.), June 5, 1861, mustered out with the regiment, June 25, 1863, at New York City, commissioned chaplain October 25, 1861, with rank from June 5, 1861."*⁴

This is the brief official record of the Rev. Michael A. Nash, S.J., who volunteered as Chaplain of the 6th New York Regiment of Infantry—better

³ Bishop Henni was a fellow native and pupil of Bishop Peter Mirer of St. Gall, Switzerland. On his second visit to St. Gall in the summer of 1862, I had the honor of serving Bishop Henni's Mass in the Cathedral, being at that time a student in the *petit seminaire* of St. Gall.

⁴ **Phisterer**, *New York in the War of the Rebellion*, 3d edition, Vol. ii, p. 1786. Albany, 1912.

known, perhaps, as "Billy Wilson's Zouaves,"—and who served with that command from June 5, 1861, to June 25, 1863, ministering to the men and officers, who idolized him, and accompanying them through all their encampments, marches, battles, sieges and sufferings during their two years' campaign in the trying climate of the far South.

Father Nash was thirty-six, and not thirty-three years old when he became chaplain of this noted regiment. He was born in Kilkenny, Ireland, September 29, 1825. He was five years old when his parents emigrated to America and settled near Louisville, Ky. In due time he entered St. Mary's College, which had been founded by the western missionary, Father William Byrne, and which was then in charge of the Jesuits. Later Father Nash taught here under Father Evremond, S.J. He joined the Society of Jesus in Louisville, April 13, 1844, in his nineteenth year.

In 1846, the Kentucky Jesuits were invited by Bishop Hughes to take charge of St. John's College and Seminary at Fordham, N. Y., which had been opened on June 24, 1841, in the old Rose Hill Manor house, then outside the city, and there the future army chaplain was appointed Prefect of Studies under the presidency of Father Augustus J. Thebaud, S.J. The following year he was sent by his superiors to the Holy Name school which had been recently opened in the city by Father John Ryan, S.J., and when school and church were destroyed by fire, January 22, 1848, the classes were continued in the basement of old St. James' Church, on James Street, until the following May when new quarters were found for it at No. 77 Third Avenue. This was the cradle of the famous St. Francis Xavier's College on West 16th Street; for Father Ryan removed the school, November 25, 1850, to the present site of the College, which he built later and of which he was president until 1855.

Father Nash was his assistant in the inauguration of the Holy Name school and in the founding of St. Francis Xavier's, where he was a member of the faculty until he was again sent to St. John's, Fordham, as Prefect and in order to complete his philosophical course. After a prefecture of four years, his superiors sent him to the scholasticate at Laval, France. He finished his course there, and studied at Paderborn, Germany, where he was ordained August 18, 1859. After spending some time at the house of the Jesuits at Feldkirchen, he returned, being recalled to New York on the outbreak of the war. He was in his tertianship at Frederick, Md., when he was informed that Col. Wilson needed a chaplain for a regiment that was not composed of saints but in which there were many Catholics. He visited the camp on Staten Island in April, 1861, where the regiment was being organized and offered his services. He was warmly welcomed, particularly by the Catholic officers, among whom were Lieut. Col. Michael Cassidy, Dr. Edmund Lynch, assistant surgeon, Captains M. E. Bradley, Robert Mahan, Peter Duffy, Henry Dufraine, A. H. McCormack, and Lieutenants Patrick and Thomas Duffy. He was mustered in with the regiment on June 5, 1861, and on the fifteenth of June sailed with his command to Santa Rosa Island, Florida, where they began a hard campaign of two years, inaugurated under the scorching rays of a southern sun. The regiment served at Camp Brown, Santa Rosa, Fort Jefferson, and at Pensacola, in the military department of the South; in the department of the Gulf; in the first brigade of

Dwight's division; and in the first brigade, fourth division, nineteenth army corps. Father Nash was with it always, serving continuously without furlough or leave of absence until the regiment's term of enlistment had expired.

Besides his reports to his superiors, Father Nash was a faithful and interesting correspondent of some old friends and benefactors in New York, who occasionally sent him clothing, supplies, and delicacies for himself and his "boys," and from a score of such letters he speaks now through the following extracts:

CAMP BROWN, SANTA ROSA, FLA., SEPTEMBER 9, 1861.

I am burnt as black as a negro and have a long flowing beard as grey as though I were sixty. I wear a blue flannel shirt and trousers, and the heat is so intense that the men and officers go in *négligé*. Not one of us has slept in a bed or seen a house since we left New York. Give me the clear open air with the starry heavens for a roof and a blanket to wrap myself up in, so the snakes and lizards can not get at me, and the soft side of a plank for a bed. The soldiers say that if they had not Mass they could hardly believe they are men. My men attend well to their religious duties, but are suffering from dysentery which is now taking a serious turn in our camp. We buried two officers from a man-of-war the other day. We do not know when the battle will begin. Our officers are trying to draw them into a fight but they will not take. We burnt their docks but they did not notice it; we blazed away at them but there was no response. Our guns are always loaded and ready and the men are kept at their posts day and night. The fleet is in the offing with steam up prepared to shell them across our island. When they fire the whistling of the shells and the roar of the guns make one think of the day of judgment. Pray for peace if only to have the merit of asking Our Lord to stop the carnage. Our camp was flooded by recent rains and my great concern was to keep my little chapel dry. I have two little drummer boys as altar boys and the little chaps are always on hand. One of them has been ordered to accompany a detail of one hundred of our men to Fort Jefferson, Tortugas. Shall I ever see them again? It was really encouraging to see these boys, about ten years old, marching across the burning sands to the beach and rolling their drums calling the men to Mass from the ships at anchor two miles off from the camp.

SANTA ROSA CAMP, OCTOBER 7, 1861.

I am sending some shells which I gathered on the beach of Santa Rosa under the hundreds of guns that bristle through the frowning walls of Fort Pickens. We are now used to other kind of shells. Not long ago some of our men went over the bay to the enemy's shore and burnt their only man-of-war. I was very busy in my confessional before the start. The detachment rowed off though the enemy had 145 guns bearing on them. Presently we saw the flash of the guns and the battle was on half a mile from where we stood. Our men routed the enemy back into the town, spiked their guns and burnt their ships and were back in camp before daylight. I wondered and hoped that there was a priest to shrive their wounded and dying and imagine my feelings when I was told it was impossible for me to render any aid. A deserter who had come over to us told me that they were burying the dead all the next day.

CAMP BROWN, SANTA ROSA, FLA., OCTOBER 30, 1861.

Since the last bloody engagement I have had no rest, being on duty almost day and night attending to my poor boys. About two thousand of the enemy fell upon us while asleep, set fire to our tents and fired volley after volley into us as we fled

from the flames. I do not know how we escaped annihilation, except by the mercy of God. The bullets whistled by my ears like mosquitoes. My drummer boys escaped but lost their drums. Our poor soldiers fell thick and fast about me and I had more to do in ministering to them than in any mission I ever gave. I found a young corporal of our regiment prostrate behind one of the sand banks. He recognized me and said: "Father, I am going fast. I am not a Catholic and I want to be baptized before I die." I consoled him and was about to start to the beach for water, when he cried: "O, Father, don't leave me, don't leave me!" He took my hand and pressed it to his lips and I had to tear myself free from his grasp. I ran to the beach, soaked my handkerchief in the sea water and pressed enough on his pallid brow to make him a child of God. I then told him I had to go as many another poor fellow like him needed me. He again took hold of my sleeve begging me not to leave him, saying: "They are all Catholics and know how to die," and as his strength was fast ebbing I staid a few moments when his poor soul left the scenes of war and strife and blood to take up its abode in the city of eternal peace.

The tide of battle had turned and our troops got the upper hand and put the enemy to flight. Returning from the pursuit our men sent out carts from the fort and brought back the dead and wounded. We found our camp in ashes and it was then midday and we had not broken our fast. After coffee we began to prepare to bury the dead. It was late that night when all the corpses were gathered in and our late enemies separated from our own, all names and addresses were taken where possible. There they lay, covered with blood and wounds their uniforms torn. It was a ghastly sight. No coffin to receive them, no wife or mother to prepare their loved ones for their final repose; but after stern military usage they were consigned to mother earth just as they lay. My little drummers borrowed drums from the fort and with muffled drums and mournful fifes we marched at the dead of night to the spot selected for their last resting-place. How easy it was for me, tired and worn out as I was, to preach the funeral of these dead soldiers all gallant fellows sent untimely to meet their God. The sand was filled in on the common grave, the last volley of farewell was fired over friend and foe, and as taps sounded far over the waters we took our leave and returned to camp about midnight. This is the feast of the Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, but I was deprived of the comfort of offering the Holy Sacrifice as all my effects, vestments, chalice, altar furnishings, were burnt up. I have written to St. Francis Xavier's for a new outfit but it has not arrived as yet.

CAMP LINCOLN, SANTA ROSA ISLAND, JANUARY 15, 1862.

Two bombardments and several skirmishes have taken place since my last, in which we lost a number of men. My heart was sick at seeing so many hurried so suddenly into eternity. One morning I saw nine men killed, five having had their heads blown clean off them. I myself was in constant danger and moreover in poor health. Yet the thought of dying here without seeing a priest or having the last Sacraments is frightful. After a good deal of trouble I obtained permission to go to Key West where I could see a priest and make my confession. As I intended before returning to visit all the naval and military stations on the Gulf, I brought with me everything requisite for the celebration of Holy Mass, but, alas! all fell overboard and though recovered the vestments are nearly ruined, but perhaps good enough for camp life. After a journey of five hundred miles I at last reached Key West and had the pleasure of once more seeing a priest. How good God is! There, now, I made my confession, perhaps the last I shall ever make. Whilst waiting for a steamer to take me back to my post of duty I was requested to give

a mission to the people, the soldiers and sailors of Key West. Thanks be to God, all succeeded admirably and the devotions were largely attended. I preached twice a day and heard confessions at all times. There are many war vessels at anchor in the harbor and nearly all the sailors and soldiers are Catholics. Their attendance and devotion are beyond all praise. One evening I was so beat out and sick that I could not preach but the good people took such tender care of me that I was able to resume my work the next morning. Then, just after Mass an officer from the fort came to inform me that a man-of-war was just starting and that I had not a moment to lose. Off I started without breakfast but the good people saw me and came to thank me for the good they said I had done their husbands, as if it was not God's work. A cutter was ready to take me out to the ship and the jolly Jack tars were delighted to have a "Father" with them and soon they had me aboard of the man-of-war.

I found that it was to cruise after privateers and that gave me a splendid chance to do something for the 600 marines and sailors in her ship's complement. We set sail just as a terrific storm came up that threatened us all, but our Blessed Mother and the guardian angels watched over us and we weathered the gale. Every vessel that came in sight was chased in the hope of catching some of the privateers and I was surprised with what animation and rapidity everything was prepared for a possible battle. The decks were cleared, the guns loaded and shoved out and every man stood to his post as we bore down on any poor craft with all the speed of steam. I reached the camp in due time only to learn that there had been a great fight after my departure in which one of our men was killed. They told me that while dying he called out piteously for me though I was five hundred miles away. He was one I could not get to go to confession; how is it that they won't go to the Sacraments when they can? Our Lord said to the Pharisees who refused to do as he told them: "You will seek me and you shall not find me and you shall die in your sins." Wonderful are the ways of God! What matters the world with its sufferings and its pleasures? I hope no one will have sympathy for me but I ask all your prayers that I may profit by the sufferings the Lord is good enough to send me.

(In the opening of the above letter Father Nash told his correspondent that a box of clothing that had been sent to him and which arrived in his absence, had been rifled. His postscript to the letter is as follows: "Please do not mention to any one about the box being opened. It would be against charity. I had to tell you but you must not tell anyone else.")

CAMP LINCOLN, SANTA ROSA ISLAND, FEBRUARY 2, 1862.

I forgot to say that when I was at Key West there was only one priest there and strange to say he had not seen a priest in seven months. So both of us had an opportunity to approach the Sacrament of Penance. Wonderful the ways of the Almighty! I am very weak and may have to come home. I have had a letter from Father Tellier who writes me I am free to go or stay, that I must use my own judgment. Yet, I can not bring myself to leave my poor men, though I am not well. If we serve God faithfully all will be right. This life is short, but another is at hand that will be eternal.

ALEXANDRIA PARISH RAPIDS, LOUISIANA, MAY 12, 1863.

I received your letter after I had left Baton Rouge. It was handed to me at Little Bayou Boeuf, just before a battle. Since the ninth of March we have had the most terrific marching and fighting. We have marched 500 miles and fought seven battles not to speak of living on two hardtacks a day and two tins of coffee, and sometimes no coffee. In our last battle the fighting lasted for two days and a

night and our killed and wounded numbered about 400. I never witnessed anything equal to its horrors. Our men were in an open plain while the enemy were concealed in a woods with a full view of our position. Through shot and shell our men advanced and towards evening were the victors. But with what a fearful loss of life and what work remained for me to do. One young man from Long Island named Greenwood, a Protestant, lay mortally wounded right under the enemy's battery. His arm had been shot off and as I was about to venture to get to him two soldiers dragged me back and volunteered to bring him in. It was a noble act and they succeeded. "Father," said he, as a surgeon went to work on him, "I'm not a Catholic but I wish to become one. I am soon to die; I know it; hurry, hurry, or you won't have time." I baptized him while his horrible wounds were being sewed up and he bore the pain like a hero. He lived until the next day and died when I was thirty miles away on another errand. The boys are glad that their term of service is nearly up and that they may see their friends at home once more. We are all like so many Indians, nearly black, and our clothing is all torn and ragged and they'll be grateful for any change. At the last battle my trunk and everything in it, including vestments, etc., was lost, left behind by mistake. One great regret is that it contained my history of the regiment I have learned to love, which history I had kept, day by day, since we left New York.

From the above extracts from a voluminous correspondence it will be seen that Father Nash was one of the ideal army chaplains whom the Church furnished to North and South during the War of the Rebellion; that he was devoted to duty to which he clung to the last though physically unfit; and that like a good soldier he stood to his post to the end with a supreme confidence in Divine Providence which is visible in all his letters.

He reached New York with the regiment, was mustered out of the service and bade farewell to his "boys" on June 25, 1863. After recuperating during the summer of that year, he was for a third time assigned to duty as Prefect at St. John's College, Fordham, where he remained for the next year. He was then sent to St. Stanislaus novitiate of the Jesuits, at Guelph, Canada, and served successively at St. Joseph's, Troy, N. Y., at St. Mary's, Montreal, at St. Francis Xavier's, as a member of the Jesuits' missionary band, at St. Michael's, Buffalo, N. Y., and again for nine years at Troy, from 1874 to 1888, with the exception of one year at St. Francis Xavier's, and three years at St. Lawrence's Church, New York. He was appointed spiritual director of Holy Cross College in 1892, and there celebrated the golden jubilee of his admission into the Society of Jesus. He returned to Troy two years later and died there September 6, 1895, in his seventieth year.

In his *Register of the Clergy Laboring in the Archdiocese of New York*, Archbishop Corrigan pays the following tribute to the one-time chaplain of Billy Wilson's Zouaves:

"Father Nash was a brave man and was always ready for a daring expedition. He was thus eminently suited as chaplain of the Wilson Zouaves, who were composed of the roughest element of New York. He was loved and respected by men and officers, and in turn he would never allow any one to say a word against them. Though Father Nash was not a preacher his retreats to sodalities of men and women

and to religious communities were most successful. His hearers liked his military style and he made use of his military knowledge to encourage and urge on souls in the fight against themselves and the archenemy of mankind. He was a worker and used his leisure moments to translate a number of books from French and German. Father Nash was an exact religious, was much loved by the poor wherever he went, and did not spare himself in laboring for them.”⁵

JAMES A. ROONEY, LL.D.

⁵ **Corrigan**, *Register of the Clergy*, in *Historical Records and Studies*, Vol. vi, part 2, p. 194.